

**RESIDENTS' PERCEPTION OF TOURISM IMPACTS  
AND ATTITUDE TOWARD TOURISM  
DEVELOPMENT: A SOCIO-CULTURAL  
PERSPECTIVE ANALYSIS IN JAFFNA DISTRICT**

<sup>1</sup>\*P. Hamzayini

Sri Lanka Institute of Advanced Technological Education, Colombo,  
Sri Lanka  
*sphamzayini@gmail.com*

<sup>2</sup>R. S. S. W. Arachchi

Department of Tourism Management, Faculty of Management Studies,  
Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka  
*rangana@mgt.sab.ac.lk*

**ABSTRACT**

Residents' attitude/support towards tourism development has engrossed many scholars' attention in tourism studies. To give the importance of understanding the residents' attitude towards tourism development and understand the limitations in understanding the perception of residents based on socio-cultural factors, this study endeavored to model the residents' s support for tourism development based on the study of socio-cultural impacts. To identify the relationship with dependent and independent variables, several hypotheses were developed and were tested to achieve the major objectives of this study such as identifying the most significant determinants of the perceived impacts of tourism development, assessing how the determining factors affect the perceived impacts of tourism development and determining how the perceived impacts affect the attitude towards tourism development. The proposed socio-cultural research framework has predicted the impact of knowledge about tourism, intrinsic motivation factors, community attachment, and community concern on residents' support for tourism development in Jaffna district through the mediating variables of perceived socio-cultural benefits and perceived socio-cultural costs. The perceptions of 600 residents were collected through a stratified random sampling technique. The model and hypothesis paths were tested using Structural Equation Modeling with the aid of AMOS and SPSS software packages. Findings disclose that residents' support for tourism development in Jaffna district is a role of perceived socio-cultural benefits and costs

perceived by residents and four independent variables of knowledge about tourism, intrinsic motivation factors, community attachment, and community concern. The results reveal that the perception regarding tourism impacts might create both positive and negative attitudes regarding tourism development in Jaffna district, which might assist in gaining support from the residents regarding tourism development.

***Keywords:** perceived impacts, residents' support for tourism development and socio-cultural impacts*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Tourism has become one of the major players in international commerce and symbolizes one of the primary income sources for many developing countries. According to Andereck and Vogt (2000), if a community becomes a tourist destination, the residents and the community's lives will be affected by tourism activities. Therefore, the significance of studying the impacts of tourism cannot be overrated (Yen & Kerstetter, 2008).

The support of the residents and their attitude toward tourism development has created an interest among scholars. Recognizing and assessing positive and negative impacts are the main reasons for a growing interest in this study (Lankford 1994). With that interest, studies on residents' perceptions and the impacts of tourism have already been conducted in Sri Lanka destinations like Dambulla, Kandalama, Pasikkuda etc. and various results have been identified.

Jaffna's study area is one of the Northern Province districts in Sri Lanka identified as a district with the potentials for tourism development because of its culture, geographic location, and nature. According to Mathivathany and Sasitharan (2013), Jaffna has been identified as a

widespread tourist destination. Since mid-2009, the Jaffna tourism recorded that, there has been a large inflow of domestic tourists to the Northern Province. This has led to the growth of hotels, guest houses, and halls for various functions (Sustainable development of Jaffna district 2018). Therefore, it is essential to identify the problems that hinder tourism development to achieve tourism benefits.

### **Research Problem**

According to the survey done by the District Secretariat, Jaffna, they have identified that the Jaffna district which failed to tap the potentiality due to the inability to obtain the support of communities through a consultation which was carried out with the participation of all stakeholders of the sector (Sustainable Development of Jaffna District 2018-2022). The key issues of Jaffna tourism development were found as, cultural barriers for promoting Tourism, traditional thinking amongst the community, lack of interaction between tourists and the local community and, limited awareness of the public about the needs of tourists. The community consists of Tamils as a large population and prolonged with a rich culture and several ethnic practices. As per the survey, they have explained that “There is a perception amongst the older generation and the more conservative population on the negative consequences of tourism, i.e., prostitution, gambling, burglary, drug and alcohol abuse, on the life of the community. This becomes a barrier to the development of the tourism industry”. The tourism planners also revealed that the residents’ perceptions towards tourism development in Jaffna are unknown and the planners tend to overcome the negative impacts from the residents.

In order to make a clear understanding on the residents' stance regarding tourism development in Jaffna district, this study has aimed to identify the most significant determinants of the perceived impacts of tourism development on the first hand and afterwards it aimed to study how those determining factors affect the perceived impacts of tourism development. Finally, the findings will contribute to determining how the perceived impacts affect the attitude towards tourism development in Jaffna district.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Tourism Impacts**

Community perception of tourism impacts is considered a crucial factor to be expected to influence tourism development. Numerous studies had been conducted to address tourism impact as an essential component of tourism development (Kim, Uysal & Sirgy 2013). It is that tourism planners naturally consider the impacts of tourism development and how to manage those impacts to achieve the expected outcomes (Goeldner & Ritchie 2012; Beeton 2006).

Several studies have emphasized that tourism has economic, environmental, and socio-cultural impacts (Ogorelc 2009; Andereck & Roselló 2005; Andereck & Vogt 2000). In social perspectives, it can be identified in both positive and negative ways. Studies show that tourism offers additional opportunities such as upgrading facilities, for example, increasing outdoor recreation facilities, reducing crowdedness at theatres, cinemas, concerts, and athletic events (Gunn & Var 2002). Mbaiwa (2005) stated that while considering the economic impacts, socio-cultural impacts of tourism development have not been focused much by the

researchers. Therefore, this study focuses on the socio-cultural impacts of tourism development and how those impacts determine the residents' attitudes towards tourism development.

On the other way, the studies focused on the negative social impacts as well. Many studies have shown that the destination in its growing stage experiences traffic congestion problems and crowdedness in public places (Upchurch & Teivance 2000). Furthermore, it has shown that due to tourism activities, social issues like gambling, begging, prostitution, and drug trading are also increasing (Chen 2000; Andereck et al. 2005).

While discussing the cultural impacts, from a positive perspective, literature discuss that tourism improves cultural identity and pride and cohesion of villagers, and increases locals' knowledge about their culture (Huttasin 2008). Tourism is also believed to improve community image (Uysal, Perdue, & Sirgy 2012) and increase life quality (Huttasin 2008). Among the negative cultural impacts, negative impacts on traditional family values (Huttasin 2008), commercialization of cultural activities (Zamani-Farahani & Henderson 2014), and creating social conflicts due to economic welfare and sense of jealousy (Zhou & Ap 2008).

### **Social Exchange Theory**

Ap (1992) suggested a hypothetical framework based on social exchange theory to define the motivation grounded on costs and benefits of tourism development that leads the residents to have either positive or negative perceptions regarding tourism development. As per the theory, residents will show positive attitudes and show support for tourism development if

the exchange is expected to produce greater rewards than the costs (Jurowski & Gursoy 2004). On the other hand, if the residents perceive the exchange is expected to produce more costs than the benefits, they are likely to oppose or be less supportive of this development (Gursoy, Jurowski, & Uysal 2002; Jurowski, Uysal & Williams 1997).

### **Determinant factors of perceived tourism impacts**

#### **Knowledge about tourism**

According to the study of Davis, Allen & Cosenza (cited in Meimand et al. 2017), attitudes toward tourism development can be determined by the knowledge of residents about tourism and the local economy. Howard and Lankford (1994) showed that knowledge regarding tourism and the local economy base influences the resident's attitude towards tourism development. Knowledge about tourism and the impacts on perception is one of the most analyzed socio-cultural factors. Lack of study regarding tourism knowledge in developing countries is a main limitation of the current studies.

#### **Intrinsic Motivation Factors**

A lot of research has been done on the intrinsic motivation factors of tourists since few types of research have been done on the resident's perspective. According to the Kyat studies (cited in Meimand et al. 2017), the role of social benefits and intrinsic motivation factors contribute positively towards tourism development. Furthermore, he has identified intrinsic motivation factors such as relationship creation, feeling of being needed, gain self-respect by working as a community, and opportunities to be a host to the tourists. Since few kinds of research

are done on intrinsic motivation, several studies (Yoon et al. 2002; Zhang, Inbakaran & Jackson 2006) recommended future studies on intrinsic motivation.

### **Community Attachment**

Few studies have examined the community attachment concerning the attitude towards tourism development (Jurowski, Uysal & Williams 1997; McCool & Martin 1994). Furthermore, Jurowski et al. (1997) ensure that the attached communities are expected to positively assess social impacts. Jurowski (1994) expresses community attachment as the level of social bonds such as social participation, friendship, and sentiment. Based on the studies' assumptions, community attachment may influence the residents' attitudes towards tourism development.

### **Community Concern for tourism development**

The concern of residents regarding the community may also influence their attitude to support tourism. The researches on the community concern have created mixed results, particularly on the environment (Allen et al. 1988), the culture of the host community (Mathieson & Wall cited in Gursoy, Jurowski & Uysal 2002), and recreation opportunities (Perdue, Long & Allen cited in Gursoy, Jurowski & Uysal 2002). More concern about the community, perceptions on development of the community, are focused on minimising the negative impacts concerning tourism development.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Conceptualization

The framework is developed based on several theories. Several supporting models were developed by Gursoy, Jurowski and Uysal (2002), and based on those existing models; this framework was developed based on social exchange theory to explore the correlation between independent variables of determinant factors and the dependent variable of support/attitude for tourism through two mediating variables called perceived socio-cultural benefits and perceived socio-cultural costs. The literature supports the role of independent variables of knowledge about tourism, intrinsic motivation, community attachment, and community concern.

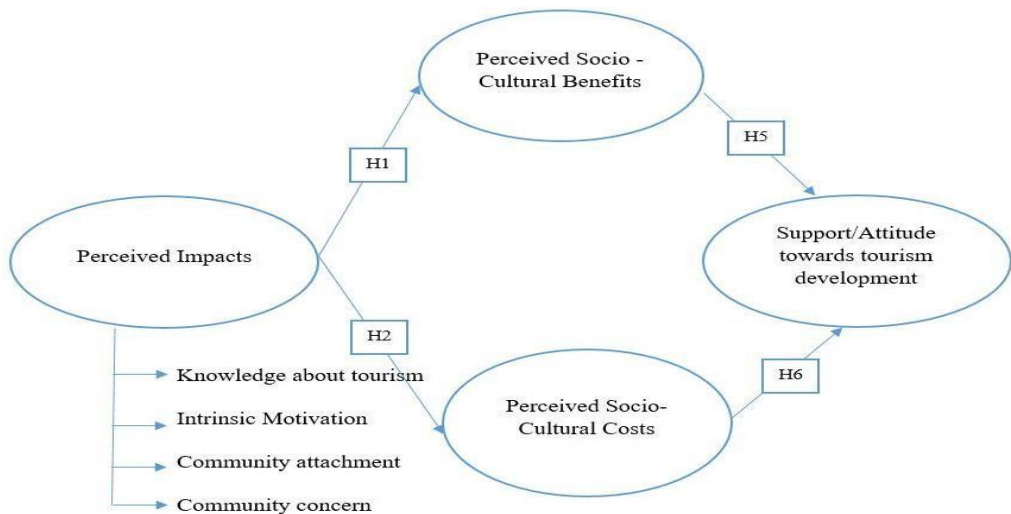


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

### Operationalization

Though this study used some systematized questions from the previous studies, some changes were made to match the study area and the



knowledge level of the local community people. The study was conducted in the Jaffna area, where most of the local community uses the Tamil language. Therefore, the final questionnaire was used in two languages English and Tamil. The questionnaire was also pre-tested with 30 random individuals to recognize the possible problems in the final questionnaire and terms of validity. Experts in the field were requested to review the questionnaire and revisions were made based on the experts' suggestions. Respondents of the survey were asked to answer the questions in the five-point Likert scale system where the responses were ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The questionnaire consists of 08 sections, including the demographic profile of the respondents. The other sections covered the questions about determinant factors of tourism impacts. 03 open-ended questions were added to explore the opinion about tourism development and understand the residents' expectations and understanding regarding the tourism development in Jaffna.

### **Hypotheses of the study**

- H<sub>1</sub>: There is a relationship between perceived impacts and socio-cultural benefits.
- H<sub>2</sub>: There is a relationship between perceived impacts and socio-cultural costs.
- H<sub>3</sub>: There is a mediating effect of socio-cultural benefits between perceived socio-cultural impacts and the attitude towards tourism development.

H<sub>4</sub>: There is a mediating effect of socio-cultural costs between perceived socio-cultural impacts and the attitude towards tourism development.

H<sub>5</sub>: There is a relationship between socio-cultural benefits and attitudes towards tourism development.

H<sub>6</sub>: There is a relationship between socio-cultural costs and attitudes towards tourism development.

### **Research Design**

The resident's support for tourism development has been evaluated based on the DS divisions of Jaffna districts. Based on 15 DS divisions, there were 07 DS divisions selected based on the tourists' most visited attractions based on the field survey of District Secretariat Jaffna. Out of 135183 residents (In chosen DS divisions considered the residents over 18 years), 600 samples were used based on a stratified random sampling technique to decide the sample size. The sample was stratified so that the responses reflected many residents from the areas where tourism activities occur comparatively high compared to other DS divisions. Standardized questionnaires were organized to collect the data. For the convenience of data collection in the selected regions, translated questionnaires were deployed for the residents. Three software packages were used to analyze the data. SPSS (version 21) was used for the descriptive analysis, Reliability Analysis, and Structural equation model. AMOS (version 21) was used for the Structural equation model.

## DATA ANALYSIS

**Table 1: Profile of respondents**

		Percentage
Gender	Male	49.2
	Female	50.8
Age	18-29	42.3
	30-44	42.8
	45-64	11.0
	65 & above	3.8
Marital status	Single	45
	Married	54.5
Occupation	Student	8.0
	Un-employed	8.0
	Self-employed	9.0
	Governmental	41.0
	Non-governmental	30.0
	Retired	4.0
Education	No schooling	4.2
	Secondary school	26.3
	Certificate/Diploma	23.7
	Bachelors' degree	36.5
	Masters' degree	9.3
Income level (Annual)	<200000	43.5
	200000-400000	22.8
	400000-600000	10.3
	600000-800000	8.8
	800000-1000000	6.0
	1000000>	6.8

### Reliability

According to table 2, all the Cronbach's alpha values are greater than 0.7, which means this questionnaire is good and some of the variables were shown Cronbach's alpha value greater than 0.9 as well. Therefore, all the questions under different categories were taken to the analysis and interpreted to support tourism.

**Table 2: Cronbach's Alpha value**

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha value
Support for Tourism	0.903
Perceived Socio-cultural Benefits	0.864
Perceived Socio-cultural Costs	0.883
Knowledge about Tourism	0.796
Intrinsic Motivation Factors	0.860
Community Attachment	0.914
Community Concern	0.882

### Validity

#### Convergent validity & Discriminant Validity

All the AVE values are identified greater than 0.5. Therefore, those variables could be considered as variables.

**Table 3: Average Variance Extracted**

Indicator variables	Latent variables	Average
Socio-cultural benefits	Knowledge about tourism	0.521
	Community attachment	
	Intrinsic motivation factors	
	Community concern	
Socio-cultural cost	Knowledge about tourism	0.601
	Community attachment	
	Intrinsic motivation factors	
	Community concern	
Support for Tourism	Socio-cultural cost	0.501
	Socio-cultural Benefits	

According to the results received by calculating Discriminant value and correlation values, it has been identified; all the Discriminant values are greater than correlation values.

## Checking the goodness of model

### R Square Value

**Table 4: Squared Multiple Correlations: (Group number 1 - Default model)**

	Estimate
Socio_cultural_cost	.816
Socio_cultural_Benefits	.737
Support_for_Tourism	.803

### CFI (Comparative fit index) & Goodness of Fit (GFI)

All CFI values are greater than 0.9 which indicates a well-fitted model. Also, AGFI value has been identified as 0.948. Therefore, it can be indicated as a well-fitted model.

## Checking the significance of variables

**Table 5: Regression model**

		Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Socio_cultural_Benefits	<--- Knowledge_about_Tourism	.282	.032	8.909	***
Socio_cultural_Benefits	<--- Community_Attachment	-.039	.032	-1.247	.012
Socio_cultural_cost	<--- Community_Attachment	.158	.046	3.459	***
Socio_cultural_cost	<--- Community_Concern	.119	.038	3.148	.002
Socio_cultural_cost	<--- Intrinsic_Motivation_Factors	-.179	.044	-4.061	***
Socio_cultural_Benefits	<--- Intrinsic_Motivation_Factors	.503	.031	16.506	***
Socio_cultural_cost	<--- Knowledge_about_Tourism	.415	.046	9.079	***
Socio_cultural_Benefits	<--- Community_Concern	.023	.026	.880	.037
Support_for_Tourism	<--- Socio_cultural_cost	-.031	.031	-1.007	.034

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Support_for_Tourism	<---	Socio_cultural_Benefits	.737	.039	19.115	***

According to the analysis, all the P values are less than 0.05 which means all the coefficients of the structural equation model are significant at the 5% level of significance.

### Structural Equation Model

It shows the beta values of the model, according to figure 2, all the mention relationships have beta values which are indicated with the arrows. According to the model, the socio-cultural benefit has the highest positive relationship ( $\beta = 0.62$ ) with tourism support. In that time, the socio-cultural benefit behaved like an independent variable and support for tourism is the dependent variable and socio-cultural benefit has a negative relationship ( $\beta = -0.03$ ) with the support for tourism. Knowledge about Tourism, Intrinsic Motivation Factors, Community Attachment, and Community Concern also has a relationship with both socio-cultural benefits and socio-cultural costs. When considering the socio-cultural benefits, all three of the dependent variables have shown positive values. Knowledge about Tourism ( $\beta = 0.29$ ), Intrinsic Motivation Factors ( $\beta = 0.53$ ), Community Attachment ( $\beta = -0.04$ ), and Community Concern ( $\beta = 0.03$ ) indicate a relationship with socio-cultural benefits. Moreover, here community attachment has seen as a negative relationship with socio-cultural benefits. Furthermore, the highest coefficient has been identified by the motivation factors.

Knowledge about Tourism ( $\beta = 0.34$ ), Intrinsic Motivation Factors ( $\beta = -0.15$ ), Community Attachment ( $\beta = 0.13$ ), and Community

Concern ( $\beta = 0.12$ ) shows the relationship with socio-cultural cost. Here intrinsic motivation factors indicate a negative relationship with the socio-cultural cost.

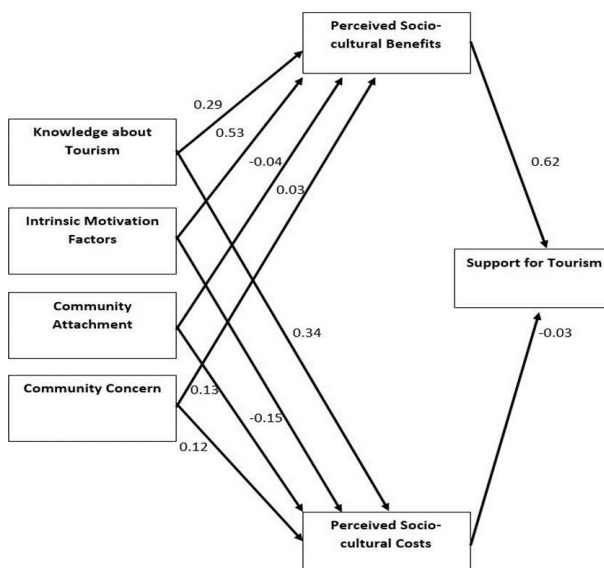


Figure 2: Structural Equation Model

### Hypothesis Testing

**Table 6: Summary of the research hypothesis (direct effects)**

Hypothesis	Dependent variable	Independent variable	Beta value	Result
H <sub>1</sub> : There is a relationship between	Socio-cultural benefits	Knowledge about tourism	0.29	Supported

perceived impacts and socio-cultural benefits.	Intrinsic motivation	0.53	Supported
	Community concern	-0.04	Supported
	Community Attachment	0.03	Supported
H <sub>2</sub> : There is a relationship between perceived impacts and socio-cultural costs.	Socio-cultural Knowledge about tourism	0.34	Supported
	Intrinsic motivation	-0.15	Supported
	Community concern	0.13	Supported
	Community Attachment	0.12	Supported

All the beta values of table 5, are significant at the 5% level of significance (table 5). Knowledge about tourism ( $\beta = 0.29, P < 0.05$ ), intrinsic motivation ( $\beta = 0.53, P < 0.05$ ), community concern ( $\beta = -0.04, P < 0.05$ ) & community attachment ( $\beta = 0.03, P < 0.05$ ) has direct effects on the socio-cultural benefits. And, knowledge about the tourism ( $\beta = 0.34, P < 0.05$ ), intrinsic motivation ( $\beta = -0.15, P < 0.05$ ), community concern ( $\beta = 0.13, P < 0.05$ ) & community attachment ( $\beta = 0.12, P < 0.05$ ) have direct effects on the socio-cultural cost. Therefore, there was a proven relationship between impacts and socio-cultural cost (H<sub>2</sub>) & benefits (H<sub>1</sub>).



**Table 7: Summary of the research hypothesis (direct effects)**

Hypothesis	Dependent variable	Independent variable	Beta value	Result
H <sub>5</sub> : There is a relationship between socio-cultural benefits and attitudes towards tourism development.	Support for the tourism	Socio-cultural benefits	0.62	Supported
H <sub>6</sub> : There is a relationship between socio-cultural costs and attitudes towards tourism development.	Support for the tourism	Socio-cultural costs	-0.03	Supported

**Table 8: Summary of the research hypothesis (indirect effects)**

Hypothesis	Related variables	Estimate	Lower bound	Upper bound
H <sub>3</sub> : There is a mediating effect of socio-cultural benefits between perceived socio-cultural impacts and the attitude towards tourism development.	Knowledge about tourism and support for the tourism	-0.021	-0.096	0.046
	Intrinsic motivation and support for the tourism	0.378	0.292	0.469
H <sub>4</sub> : There is a mediating effect of socio-cultural costs between perceived socio-cultural impacts and the attitude towards tourism development.	Community concern and support for the tourism	-0.004	-0.016	0.283
	Community attachment and support for the tourism	0.197	0.114	0.003

Knowledge about tourism, intrinsic motivation factors, community concern and community attachment were the major factors considered in this study and all functioned as independent variables which did not directly affect the support for tourism. All these affected socio-cultural costs and benefits, consequently. Further, the socio-cultural costs and benefits affected the support for tourism. Therefore, Socio-cultural costs and benefits were treated as both dependent and independent variable which have contributed to the mediating effect between the perceived socio-cultural impacts and the support/attitude towards tourism development.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Conclusion**

This study offers an understanding of this study's major theoretical contribution based on the investigation of perceived socio-cultural impacts on tourism development in the Jaffna district. The overall study elaborates that residents in Jaffna district perceived socio-cultural impacts of tourism positively and the way of support for future tourism development. The factors considered to directly affect tourism support in the Jaffna area truly influence the perceptions of tourism costs and benefits.

Overall, residents in Jaffna district in this study perceived the socio-cultural impacts of tourism positively and greatly tend to support the future tourism development in their area which is similar to the studies conducted in Passikuda and Kandalama and other destinations in Sri Lanka. Among all the identified factors in this study, intrinsic motivation

is considered the major aspect that leads to residents' great acceptance of tourism. Through these findings, it can be concluded that residents require economic motivation to consider tourism as beneficial, but the non-monetary motives such as motivation to accomplishments, motivation to know, and stimulation experience were also proved.

Knowledge about tourism could explain according to the theorem; the findings were consistent with previous studies that argued; knowledgeable members of a community show more concern about the cost and benefits of tourism in the community (Andereck *et al.*, 2005). The results show that knowledgeable residents in the local area understand tourism development socially and culturally positively in their area of living while similar respondents with the same level of knowledge negatively show their perception concerning socio-cultural costs. Community attachment also indicates a significant positive impact on socio-cultural cost. The findings indicate that determining factors were positively affected by the socio-cultural cost, on the other hand, this kind of unmeasurable variable could be affected negatively to benefits also. Community attachment shows estimated to determine the decrease in socio-cultural benefits as well as there was a positive impact on socio-cultural benefit and cost by community concern. The results indicate that the society highly considers the socio-cultural impacts and protection of their society.

Concerning the limitations of established theories and the empirical studies, this study has tried to magnify the theory supporting support of support in support of supporting tourism development and tried to create

the managerial implications and contribute to the existing body of knowledge. This study might attract the different types of policymakers and tourism planners to develop further tourism development strategies that can get along with the residents' preferences and expectations.

### **Recommendations**

- Defining appropriate policies to reduce negative socio-cultural impacts: Residents in Jaffna district will be more inclined to support tourism development if they perceive that appropriate tourism policies protect their living area's socio-cultural values.
- Establishing the roles of the public and private sector and involving community members in tourism planning: The findings of this study suggest a need for cohesive collaboration in sustainable planning related to tourism development. For better justification, the issue in tourism development includes the need for responsible planning and management.
- Government involvement and active participation in creating awareness regarding tourism concerns: The public sector must participate in the education and preparation of all stakeholders in using the information, training decisions, analyzing the level of risks, and resolving concerns of parties related to the destination management.
- The diversification of tourism activities in Jaffna district: Apart from these cultures, lifestyle, festivals which are highly concerned with the culture of the society, the diversification of tourism activities like farm and nature, participating in many types of operations along with residents and bullock cart riding, pony riding, buffalo riding, cooking

traditional foods, and actively participating in local traditions will lead to eliminating the negative perception regarding the tourism development.

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